Decline in water level of rivers

857. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have realized that a huge crack has been spotted in the originating place of the river Ganga *viz* the Gangotri Glacier due to global warming;

(b) if so, whether there is every possibility of declining of water level after some period, of the life giving rivers like Ganga, Sindhu, Yamuna and Brahmputra;

(c) whether Government are aware that due to decline in water level of the rivers, the country would face serious water crisis for irrigation, drinking and power projects; and

(d) what efforts are being made by Government to meet such a serious situation in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Mines have informed that Geological Survey of India (GSI) is aware of the cracks that have developed in the snout of Gangotri Glacier which is because of the recession of the majority of Himalayan Glaciers, including Gangotri Glacier. The development of cracks in the snout region of a Glacier, which is in a receding state is quite natural. In fact, this process is related to a phenomenon which is know as calving of snout region.

(b) Based on the studies carried out by GSI, it is now well established that the Glaciers are receding. The causative factors may be subnormal snowfall, higher temperature during summer, less severe winter or a combination of all of them. If the present scenario of receding Glaciers is accelerated, there may be some reduction in the river discharge'. However, it may be noted that the major part of the discharge is contributed by snow fall and precipitation which is likely to go up with global warming.

(c) The continuous retreat of Glaciers may lead to marginal shortage of water in the Himalayan Rivers. However, it may be mentioned that the major part of the Glacier melt runoff is released during June-September period which is the time for monsoon activity. Thus, marginal decrease in Glacier contribution may be compensated by increased monsoon activity.

(d) The recession can be checked to a very limited extent (site specific only) through artificial measures. Marginal reduction in melting rate can be achieved by spray of saw dust/chemicals over the surface of the Glacier Ice only for limited period.

Implementation of minor irrigation schemes for STs

858. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing minor irrigation schemes for STs;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years,

(c) the amount earmarked and utilized under this scheme; and

(d) the present status of each scheme State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV: (a) and (b) Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has initiated a special programme to provide 100 per cent financial assistance to States for taking up minor irrigation schemes for lands owned by STs during 2005-06. For the purpose, Planning Commission had earmarked and amount of Rs. 50 crore during 2005-06 and Rs. 150 crore during 2006-07 in the budget of MoTA. The projects are aimed to enhance the productivity of land belonging to tribals, water harvesting, soil conservation and promote economic development, improve socio-economic conditions, generate employment and improvement of biodiversity and ecological conservation and thereby poverty alleviation of tribal people residing in tribal areas.

(c) and (d) The State-wise details of funds allocated/released during 2005-06 and 2006-07 by MoTA under the scheme are given in the Statement (See below). Utilization certificates for the funds released during 2005-06 have not yet become due.